



Why Make a Difference for Women?

By Franciska Dekker



Why make a difference for women?

Why would you want to make a difference for women as a coach? Why would you choose them as a specific target group in a world where we strive for diversity and gender neutrality? We passed that stage, right? We have to solve our challenges together and for that we have to bring women and men together, right?

In this article I will discuss why making a difference for women is necessary, distinguishing between the ideal world and reality, between the individual level and the group level.

Context

We live in a world and in a time with enormous challenges. A world that keeps asking for "new leadership" that brings together awareness, diversity and inclusion.

In their book *Shakti Leadership: Embracing feminine and masculine power in business*, Nilima Bhat and Raj Sisodia (2016) describe the double crisis that is going on in the world, namely a crisis in leadership and a crisis in consciousness. They demonstrate the usefulness and necessity for a new power base: Shakti.

Shakti represents the primary life force, the flow of inspiration that arises from presence, and is seen as a feminine principle. Bhat and Sisodia further elaborate on polarities and the ability of conscious leaders to develop both healthy masculine and healthy feminine traits (Figure 1) and to use them effectively according to circumstances.

The old "overly masculine" seems dysfunctional in our current society. Female leadership is needed to restore balance. For example, quotas have been created for women and principles, ways of thinking, structures that embody more feminine values have become commonplace in all kinds of leadership programs and desired corporate cultures.

Masculine & Feminine Poles

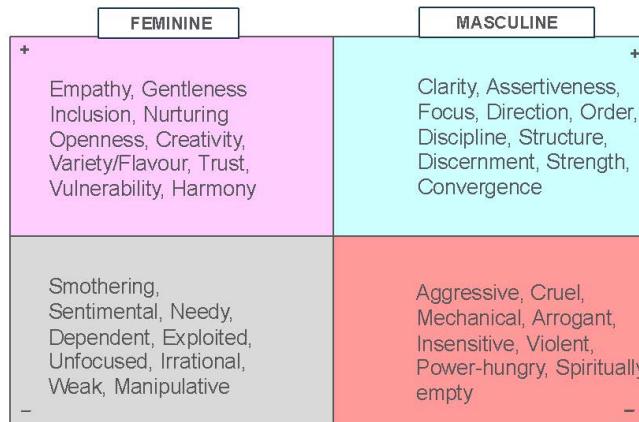


Figure 1. Feminine and masculine poles (simplified and translated from Shakti Leadership (2016), and based on Barry Johnson)

Ideal world

The ideal world is where we work together on what is best for all. A world where we build together and stand on each other's shoulders. A world where one and one equals three, or much more. A world where we feel happy, feel of value, lead a good life, enjoy the beauty and our creative and realization power. Being able to live according to our own integrity and appreciate each other's unique contributions are the norm. We strengthen each other in our natural strength. Diversity and inclusion is self-evident in this natural order.

Chaos

Experience shows that in our day to day we can fall out of our power due to circumstances and our integrity can be affected. We are then no longer connected to our life force. We often do not even notice this in the moment itself. What we do observe is, for example, energy loss, conflict, loss of connection, poor communication, clumsy actions and poorly running projects. There is a certain amount of chaos coming into our lives and that chaos is the signal that we are not in our healthy strength.

In-person

Assuming personal coaching helps people to be the "best version of themselves" and to achieve the goals they want or need, there need not be a difference in coaching for men and coaching for women. The coach has his tools to promote awareness and to stimulate the personal leadership of the client, and that in a safe environment. He knows how to deal with different personalities, people's needs and ways in which they learn.

Collective

The movement that does deserve our collective support is the movement towards a world where we can rely on each other's natural forces; in which the "healthy feminine" integrates with the "healthy masculine". In reality, following the above distinction between the natural order of the ideal and the chaos of the day to day, we are dealing with a healthy and unhealthy mix of the masculine and feminine poles. Awareness of this and taking personal responsibility are the keys to creating a movement forward.

Profit

The development of a healthy whole requires the healthy, natural versions of the parts.

It is necessary that women find their own healthy share and know how to connect this with the healthy masculine. They benefit from a process, method and a safe environment that facilitate this.

The active force field, maintained by social beliefs, norms and stereotypes, is still predominantly "masculine" and that requires an extra effort for women to take up their position and participate in the playing field. Women have to "man up" and are not necessarily the best version of themselves, because they are not fully connected to their natural source of energy and inspiration.

As a result, they are only partially effective in the service of their personal mission, their contribution to their environment. The pitfall exists that women continue to learn to man up, precisely because of the prevailing force field, and because there are still educational institutions in terms of organization, culture, curricula and examination, drenched in all the tiny capillaries of the old system.

The archetypal nature of women requires a different game, a different orientation, which women have hidden away in order to participate in the old system. They must be able to bring their unique focus back to the surface, in order to be fully empowered and to be able to use their full potential. Women generally learn differently than men: they thrive in groups and like to share their experiences. There is a need among women to reflect with each other in a nurturing and safe environment, where they do not have to defend themselves or need to hold their ground.

There is this longing to know oneself as fully as possible and to bring one's own wisdom to the surface. It helps them to know that they are not alone, nor deviating from a norm. Sisterhood is important in this. Sometimes this has to be rediscovered. Due to bad experiences ("crabs basket") or out of fear of not being taken for full, women sometimes do not want to be in a women's group. They believe they prefer to work with male colleagues.

Women are often insufficiently aware of their strength and influence. They can use both the stimulus and the safety to understand and use their own operating system by learning how to trust their intuition and how to work and live from inner inspiration. This process is accelerated when women learn and explore together. By putting women together, it also becomes visible where the knots are in the system. Blind spots in the organization are becoming visible and it is becoming increasingly clear which changes are needed in the organizational structures, procedures and processes: both for women themselves and for the organization where they work.

Finally

Back to the question: why make a difference for women in a world where we strive for unity in diversity and gender neutrality? My answer is because there is a demand from both individual female leaders and the organizations in which they work. And also because there are social costs if we don't do it, and there is a profit to be made if we do: for women themselves and also systemically, for society and organizations.



About Tiara International LLC

Tiara is a global leadership development company that provides coaching, consulting, and virtual leadership development solutions based on the Tiara Model for True Leadership (SM). The Tiara Resource Circle is an online leadership development resource for women, providing the leadership insight, tools, and support they need at any time.